

F

695

.K48

Kansas—The Lecompton Constitution.

SPEECH

OF

HON. DAVID KILGORE, OF INDIANA.

Delivered in the U. S. House of Representatives, March 24, 1858.

Mr. Chairman, I do not expect, at this late period of the session, when the all-exciting topic of controversy has been discussed in every form, to be able to introduce a single new idea, nor would I, on this occasion, open my mouth, but that it will be expected, perhaps, by those whom I represent here, that I should say something. I regret extremely to see that bitterness of feeling which is evinced on the part of gentlemen upon this floor in the discussion of this subject. I represent a peaceable, orderly, law-abiding Quaker constituency. The angry feeling with which they are denounced upon this floor would be startling to them, if they could witness it as I have witnessed it for the last few months. I have been astonished to find gentlemen representing the interests of the South denouncing men upon this side indiscriminately as a band of Abolitionists, and applying to them the general charge of negro stealing. Why, sir, just such denunciations have tended to rouse that excitement of party feeling which now rages all over the country. The people of the North are denounced, and charged with every crime in the whole catalogue of crimes. It was remarked the other day that speeches made by Southern gentlemen were sent by Northern men to their constituents. That is true; and, on the other hand, when we happen to have an imprudent speaker upon our side of the House, who denounces your institutions in terms of bitterness, you also flood your country with his speeches. They are sent there, if not to the mass of the people, at least to the political leaders, for the purpose of showing Northern sentiment towards Southern institutions. Human nature is the same, North and South. We read your speeches; and we do it for the purpose of showing the feelings you

entertain towards us and our institutions; and you circulate speeches made by gentlemen of the North, and they have the same effect—to excite public indignation against us.

These things are done, too, when partisan strife is raging all over this country with unbounded licentiousness.

But, sir, we are called Abolitionists, and denounced as fanatics. Why is this? Cannot gentlemen distinguish between abolishing slavery in the States where it exists by virtue of local laws, and extending it into Territories that are free? The difference is to me so palpable that I think no man ought to confound them. I am an old-fashioned Whig; and I stand, upon this slavery question, where the old Whig party stood; where that distinguished leader of the Whig party, the statesman of the nation, Mr. Clay, stood. Where slavery exists in a State by legal sanction, there let it alone. Where slavery exists by virtue of law, there let it alone, until those having the legal authority determine to abolish it. But, sir, where slavery does not exist; where Territories are free; where there is no law creating the institution, I say, what that eminent leader said among his last declarations: "I never can and never will vote, and no earthly power will ever make me vote, to spread slavery over territory where it does not exist." But, sir, I am not alone on this platform of principles. I would like to inquire of Southern gentlemen upon the other side, if they have examined Mr. Buchanan's political record closely? I would like to know whether they have not taken into their bosoms an Abolitionist? If I am an Abolitionist upon this subject, on account of occupying the ground I do, James Buchanan is an Abolitionist also, and has been one for the last forty years. True, he may have

been baptized since the Cincinnati Convention into the true faith of the South. Gentlemen will pardon me for calling their attention to a resolution signed by the distinguished occupant of the White House, in his native State, Pennsylvania, in the year 1819, when the Missouri question agitated the whole country :

"Whereas the people of this State, pursuing the maxims and animated by the beneficence of the great founder of Pennsylvania, first gave effect to the gradual abolition of slavery by a national act, which has not only rescued the unhappy and helpless African within their territory from the demoralizing influence of slavery, but ameliorating his state and condition throughout Europe and America; and whereas it would illy comport with those humane and Christian efforts to be silent spectators when this great cause of humanity is about to be agitated in Congress, by fixing the destiny of the new domains of the United States: Therefore,

"Resolved, That the Representatives in Congress from this district be, and they are hereby, most earnestly requested to use their utmost endeavors, as members of the National Legislature, to prevent the existence of slavery in any of the new Territories and States which may be created by Congress.

"Resolved, as the opinion of this meeting, That as the Legislature of this State will shortly be in session, it will be highly deserving of their wisdom and patriotism to take into their early and most serious consideration the propriety of instructing our Representatives in the National Legislature to use the most zealous and strenuous exertions to inhibit the existence of slavery in any of the Territories or States which may hereafter be created by Congress; and that the members of Assembly from this county be requested to embrace the earliest opportunity of bringing this subject before both Houses of the Legislature.

"Resolved, That, in the opinion of this meeting, the members of Congress who, at the last session, sustained the cause of justice, humanity, and patriotism, in opposing the introduction of slavery into the State, then endeavored to be formed out of the Missouri Territory, are entitled to the warmest thanks of every friend of humanity.

"Resolved, That the proceedings of this meeting be published in the newspapers in this city.

"JAMES HOPKINS.

"WILLIAM JENKINS.

"JAMES BUCHANAN.

"The foregoing resolutions, being read, were unanimously adopted; after which the meeting adjourned.

"WALTER FRANKLIN, *Chairman.*

"Attest: WILLIAM JENKINS, *Secretary.*

Mr. J. GLANCY JONES. Do I understand the gentleman to say that Mr. Buchanan drew up those resolutions?

Mr. KILGORE. No, sir; I do not know that he drew them up. I say he signed them.

Mr. J. GLANCY JONES. Do I understand him to say that he signed them?

Mr. KILGORE. I understand from the report of the papers published at that time, that Mr. Buchanan was one of a committee of three men who reported these same resolutions.

Mr. J. GLANCY JONES. I wish the gentleman would give us his authority.

Mr. KILGORE. You will find it in the Lancaster Intelligencer, volume 21, No. 21, published in 1819.

Mr. J. GLANCY JONES. With the permission of the gentleman I desire to say a

word. I have had occasion more than once to repeat what I am now about to say upon this subject; and that is, that Mr. Buchanan never signed the resolutions, and they never had his sanction in any shape or form. His name was attached to them without his authority—as frequently happens—without his knowledge or assent. That is the simple history of the matter.

Mr. KILGORE. It is too late to deny this record after a silence of forty years.

Mr. PURVIANCE. I desire to ask my colleague if Mr. Buchanan did ever in any shape or form disavow the resolutions at that time?

Mr. FLORENCE. No; nor at any other time that he was assailed.

Mr. J. GLANCY JONES. I am not aware that he did.

Mr. KILGORE. I cannot admit this cross-firing.

Mr. GROW. I would like to ask my colleague if Mr. Buchanan was in favor of the Missouri compromise?

Mr. J. GLANCY JONES. He gave his assent to it as a peace measure when every leading patriot in the country, North and South, advocated its passage to save the Union.

Mr. KILGORE. I am informed that these resolutions were published in the newspapers of his own town, at the time, and that no one assumed to contradict it. I have no doubt, Mr. Chairman, that Mr. Buchanan's friends would be very anxious to deny a great many things connected with his political history.

But, sir, I was remarking that I occupy the position occupied by Mr. Clay, and the position occupied—as I understand it—by Mr. Buchanan at that particular time. I will not pretend to say what Mr. Buchanan's opinions are now. I admit that this is an age of progression, and that he is remarkably progressive for an old gentleman. It perhaps would not be amiss for me to remark here, that instead of being an Abolitionist, as the persons with whom I act are charged with being, I am a free-State man.

I was born and reared in a slave State, and I am proud of the State of my nativity, for it is one of the noblest of the old States of this Union. She has furnished heroes to the field, and statesmen to the council of the nation. It is the land of the lamented Clay. But, as I said, I now represent here a free interest. The State of my adoption is surrounded with everything that is calculated to endear me to free institutions. When I contrast the state of things there with what I learn of the condition of the extreme Southern States, I am proud of my position. How do we stand? We have our free schools; we have our churches; we have our academies; we have our charitable institutions for the benefit of the deaf and dumb, the blind, and the insane. We have our thousands of miles of railroads, our fields teeming with abundance, our thriving towns,

our flourishing cities—everything to endear us to our home. Can those gentlemen who have denounced us on this floor as Abolitionists say as much for themselves? I refer, for the condition of the extreme Southern States, to the declarations of men who know all about them; who are not speaking at random, but who have been living witnesses of what they have described. My friend from Missouri, [Mr. BLAIR] did not exhaust all the materials yesterday. Gentlemen have hunted up the records of pauperism and crime in some of the Northern States, particularly in the State of New York. To that I have no objection. New York is represented here by gentlemen who are able to defend her and her institutions. But I would call the attention of gentlemen to a few facts connected with the history of South Carolina. The gentleman from Missouri [Mr. BLAIR] quoted from a speech made by Mr. Gregg, in 1851, before the South Carolina Institute. There is a part, however, which he did not quote, and which I will read:

"From the best estimates (says Mr. Gregg) that I have been able to make, I put down the white people who ought to work, and who do not, or are so employed as to be wholly unproductive to the State, at one hundred and twenty-five thousand."

Out of a population of three hundred thousand, at the outside, there are one hundred and twenty-five thousand who are not employed at all, or so employed as to be wholly useless. Mr. Gregg follows this up by stating that all the capital, enterprise, and intelligence of South Carolina, are employed in directing slave labor; and that "the consequence is, that a *large portion* of our poor white people are wholly neglected, and are suffered to while away an existence in a state but one step in advance of the Indian of the forest." But I am not yet through my quotations from Mr. Gregg. He says again:

"Shall we pass unnoticed the thousands of poor, ignorant, degraded, white people among us, who, in this land of plenty, live in comparative nakedness and starvation? Many a one is reared in proud South Carolina, from birth to manhood, who has never passed a month in which he has not some part of the time been stinted for meat. Many a mother is there who will tell you that her children are but scantily provided with bread, and much more scantily with meat; and, if they be clad with comfortable raiment, it is at the expense of these scanty allowances of food. These may be startling statements, but they are nevertheless true; and, if not believed in Charleston, the members of our Legislature, who have traversed the State in electioneering campaigns, can attest the truth."

Attest the truth of what? That there are thousands of men, not in her crowded cities, but in her remote districts, who are suffering for food and suffering for raiment. When gentlemen talk of the poor of the North, let them remember that they have the poor with themselves. Let them remember what Gregg says, that their poor are not more than half civilized. Here is raw material for them to operate upon. They have been operating upon it for a hun-

dred years; and when they have been operating on it for a hundred years more, I have no doubt they will find still a surplus of that raw material.

Our churches and school-houses are prized as we prize our household gods. It is with these and with our plows, our looms, and our anvils, we advance our civilization. Would it be believed that in proud South Carolina such misery exists? And yet it is lamentably true, as Mr. Gregg attests.

It could not be otherwise when the rich and productive land is all owned and used by the slave owner, while the unfortunate poor whites are left to the sand-hills and pine-swamps, upon which a church mouse would starve if allowed the range of a thousand acres.

A Senator from South Carolina asks, what should we think if they should send missionaries among our people? Why, sir, the people of Indiana would like to see such missionaries from the South among *their* poor people. They would take great pains to aid them in their benevolent purposes. They would exhibit to them a people enjoying all the comforts of life; where free labor not only receives its merited reward, but is counted honorable. They would point them to the thousand monuments of general prosperity to be found all over our State. They would learn them the true value of our free institutions. When thus shown the peace, happiness, and prosperity that pervade every class of society there, finding instead of *white slaves*, as the Senator seemed to think them, a noble set of freemen, fully informed as to all their rights, blessing and adorning a country where free thought, free speech, and a free press, are enjoyed to their fullest extent, and properly appreciated, I fear these same missionaries would hardly return to the South. But should they do so, and give the poor white men of the South a true history of what their eyes had beheld, they would flee from that region like rats from a sinking ship, until there would not be enough of them left to patrol the streets and plantations, and watch the slaves while their masters sleep.

But, says my friend from Mississippi, [Mr. DAVIS,] you are making war upon Southern institutions; and when you make war upon their institutions, the South will visit you with fire and sword. Well, sir, let them come. Let the gentlemen bring an army of the unfortunate poor of the South with them, with fire and sword. We will be glad to see them. We will not meet them with soldiers. We will treat them well; and the soldiers, attracted by our free institutions, will leave their colors. We have riot acts, and may, perhaps, indict the leaders for riot; but we will inflict no greater punishment upon them. We will vindicate our laws, but treat them with kindness, and still be just to the South; and when they get there, they will find it so great a paradise

that they will be glad to find an asylum among us; and we will receive them with open arms.

A gentleman the other day read an extract from a speech delivered by the gentleman from Virginia, [Mr. FAULKNER,] in the Legislature of that State, in 1832. Sir, the page which records that speech of the gentleman will stand as the brightest page in his biography. His name will stand recorded side by side with the great names of Washington, Jefferson, and many of the most distinguished men of Virginia or of the country. I would not have that page blotted out, were it mine, for all the wealth that slavery can give.

But there is another extract which I wish to read, from a speech delivered in the same debate by another distinguished Virginian. Mr. Curtis, in the Virginia Legislature, in the year 1832, in speaking of this institution, said:

"See the wide spreading ruin which the avarice of our ancestral government has produced in the South, as witnessed in a sparse population of freemen, deserted habitations, and fields without culture. Strange to tell, even the wolf, driven back long since by the approach of man, now returns, after the lapse of a hundred years, to howl over the desolations of slavery."

After one hundred years, the wolf will come back to howl over the desolations of slavery in old Virginia, the mother of States and statesmen—the mother of Presidents. We have driven them back from the West; they have gone beyond the voice of civilization, and we expect to keep them there. We do not expect they will come back to howl over our fields.

But, sir, our opposition to slavery, the gentleman says, is fanaticism; and a distinguished Senator, in the other end of the Capitol, [Mr. TOOMBS,] has told us that that fanaticism must be crushed out. Crushed out, sir! Let me tell that Senator that the fanaticism of which he speaks, if he chooses to call it so, is almost universal in the North. There is no man there who is an advocate of slavery. There is no man from that section of the country who will go before his constituents and advocate the extension of slavery. My colleague [Mr. HUGHES] does not support the bill for the admission of Kansas because he is in favor of the extension of slavery. It is because he loves the Democratic party, and because it is a party measure; and so it is with every Democrat from the North on this floor who supports the bill.

But Northern Democrats told the people, after the repeal of the Missouri compromise line, there was no danger of slavery going to the Territories; that there were but three hundred and fifty thousand slaveholders in the whole Union—hardly enough to people a single State; and it was said, such being the case, why raise the question of slavery at all? that freedom will always outrun slavery in a fair race. Sir, the Democrats of the North are not in favor of slavery; it is a slander upon

the Democratic party; but they are in favor of allowing the people, in settling up a country, to regulate their institutions in their own way. It is the doctrine of *squatter sovereignty*. They will speak against slavery, and they will vote against it, but they will leave it in the Territories to the action of the people; they will not endanger the peace of our institutions by attempting to prescribe here what shall be done.

Now, sir, we have frequently heard of a class of men known as dough-faces, men for whom even the South has no respect, in whom the South has no confidence. I ask if the Richmond South is not good authority on this subject? I will read a short extract from that paper:

"So Mr. DOUGLAS has shown his cloven foot to the South at last. I never believed he was whole-footed. All that he has ever done has been to cajole the South to choose between evils, to take the best she can get, to sugar over nauseous pills and bribe the Southern members to coax the South to swallow them. I never had confidence in him. *I have no confidence in any man north of Mason and Dixon's line.* They cannot be our friends and be honest. The interests of the two sections are antagonistic. The Northern man who goes for our interest necessarily goes against the interest of the North, his country, and I can have no confidence in a traitor, no matter how high his price."

Thus speaks an ultra pro-slavery paper of Northern men, who follow the lead of the South. It is true, it speaks particularly of those who believe with Mr. DOUGLAS; but we must remember the declaration, that no Northern men can be their friends and be honest.

Northern Democrats are now asked to leave the principles of their party and to come to the rescue of the South in the present question. Do Southern men want them to become traitors? Do they want to induce them to turn their backs upon the interests of the people they represent?

But, sir, we are told that, if Kansas is not admitted, it will be taken for granted that no more slave States can be admitted into the Union. If they always come in the manner in which Kansas presents herself here to-day, I hope to God none ever will be admitted into the Union; but when a State comes here with a constitution formed by the people, and they ask for slave institutions, then, and not till then, if she be refused admission into the Union, will Southern gentlemen have a right to take it for granted that we shall refuse admission to any more slave States. In the North the sentiment is universal, however, that no more slave States shall be formed out of the territory north of the Missouri compromise line, or any other free territory. Show us where a slave State, with a slave constitution, adopted by a fair vote of the people, is kept out of the Union, and then Southern gentlemen will have some good reason to complain. But, they say that the North is disposed to encroach upon the rights of the South. Why, sir, there is no

man in the North who will infringe upon a Southern man's rights. Even the Abolitionists, some two thousand in number, would not interfere with your slaves in States where they are held by law. What is their position? They want to go out of the Union because they cannot separate themselves from slavery in the Union. So with some Southern men; they want to go out of the Union because they cannot, by remaining in it, succeed in extending slavery as they would wish. I have about as much regard for the one as the other. I will tell you what I would do with these men. I would colonize them together upon the burning sands of the South or icy shores of the Northern lakes; and there I would leave them to carry out their project of dissolution by dissolving themselves, until only a single man was left; and then I would not care if he, like the London juggler, would swallow himself. [Laughter.]

Why talk about dissolving this Union? Can that dissolution be a peaceable one? Can our honored flag be trailed in the dust without first being stained with the blood of our people? No, sir, it cannot be done peaceably, and you have no right to talk about a dissolution by force. The attempt would be treasonable. You may have the power to involve the people of the two sections of this nation in civil war; you may have the power, by force and violence, to destroy the beautiful system of government which we inherit from our fathers—to ruin everything dear to the lovers of our common country; but then, let me ask, what would the South gain by it? If the attempt should result, as it most assuredly would, in civil war, spreading all over this Union, laying waste our fruitful fields, and destroying our homes, putting out the fires of our furnaces and forges, stopping the machinery of our manufactories, and silencing the hum of busy industry all over the free North, what would you of the South gain by all this? Your slaves would not be worth a dime to you, but instead of being a blessing, as you now consider them, they would prove your greatest curse; from being your submissive, obedient servants, they would become the instruments of mischief in the hands of your enemies, and the general desolation that would follow, might serve not only to remind us of the proud state from which we had fallen, but would allow the tyrants of the Old World to point at us as another evidence of the incapacity of the people to govern themselves. Broken to pieces by our own madness, we would be fit objects of universal scorn.

Mr. Chairman, you say, in the South, that you have important interests. We raise cotton, say you—so you do. We raise sugar—so you do; and we rejoice in the North, when we hear that there are good crops of sugar and cotton; and we regret it, when there is a failure of either. We rejoice when you rejoice, and mourn when you mourn. We receive

the raw material of your producers, and by our skill and handywork, aided by our machinery, transform it into fabrics useful and ornamental. Your sugar we need. It is, if not a necessity, at least a luxury of life that we are not willing to dispense with. Sir, as an evidence of our liberality towards you, even while your men were denouncing the doctrine of protection, when we wished to aid and protect Northern interests, and you refused it, we lay our votes aided in giving your sugar protection by a tariff that caused the consumers of that article to pay, in the form of duties, during the last year, nearly thirteen million dollars. Thus, when called upon, we have ever been ready to protect your interests, even when you have refused to aid us in protecting Northern manufacturers and Northern interests. And now, simply because we refuse to join you in a crusade against the rights of the people of Kansas, we are pronounced sectional and unjust to the South. Sir, you ask too much at our hands. We have given you protection, and you offer to pay us by oppression.

Mr. Chairman, I believe that if we admit Kansas under the present circumstances, it will be a violation of the rights of the people. I do believe that if we protect the rights of the people, they will always protect the rights of the States. There will be no danger, if their rights be guarded and protected; but when you deny them the right to the enjoyment of life and property, and the right to self-government so far as concerns the institutions under which they live; when you attempt to force an organic act upon them against their will, simply because you have the power to do so, it is not to be expected that they will respect those who have done them this wrong. You may have the power, by executive influence and aid, to consummate this outrage. But what will it profit you? Nothing, absolutely nothing. The laurels will wither in their winning; the spoils will not be worth possessing, while you may set an example—not worthy indeed of imitation, or to be cited as a precedent—but which, at no distant day, may be thus cited and imitated to your serious harm.

But it comes in due form of law, say gentlemen; and, as a gentleman said the other day, that is all there is of it. It has the form without the substance. As good and as valid a constitution might have been gotten up by this John Calhoun, and Henderson, and these other fugitives from justice in this city, in some grocery in Missouri, which so far as forms are concerned, would have been as correct an expression of the will of the people of Kansas as that contained in the constitution which they have already presented.

I speak of these gentlemen as fugitives from justice. I understand that they are officers of Kansas, and ought to be there; but I am inclined to think that they have been led to

believe that this is the safest place for them ; for there is a marine force here that was called upon to shoot down citizens in the streets, and which may be called out to protect them from the indignation of an outraged people.

But we have the forms of law, say they. Well, sir, there some peculiar forms which have been required in reference to this constitution. My worthy friend from Oregon [Mr. LANE] rose in his place in this House, and said, "Mr. Speaker, I present to you the constitution of the people of Oregon." There was no excitement about it—no difficulty, and no one objected. Has there been three months' discussion over it? No. Kansas had her Delegate, too, upon this floor, on this side of the House. Why was it that that gentleman was not permitted to speak for Kansas? Why was he not permitted to get up and announce that he presented to this House the constitution of Kansas? Who shall speak for the people of Kansas, when they do not speak for themselves, but their representative here? Oregon comes here of her own free will, with a constitution endorsed by her people, submitted to them in every form and shape for their determination. How comes Kansas? Kansas, covered all over with violence, is driven in here against her will. She comes here with her robes soiled ; she comes here by force and violence, and it becomes necessary that the executive robes should be put upon her. The Executive sends in a long message, telling you that the people of Kansas have formed a constitution, and that he has received it from the hands of John Calhoun. Not content with that, he must read to you a history of the villainies and outrages that have been perpetrated by the majority upon the minority in Kansas.

"Well," say gentlemen, "we cannot go behind the record, where all looks right upon its face. It does look fair upon its face, if you will shut your eyes to the truth, and close your ears to everything. But we tell you the whole matter is rotten, and ask you to investigate it. How are we met in that request? We have had to encounter executive influence, and an investigation is denied us. How, then, can gentlemen get up and say that this constitution expresses the true will of the people of Kansas, when they refuse to allow us to bring proof to establish beyond controversy that it is the consummation of the vilest frauds that have ever been perpetrated?"

The gentleman from Connecticut [Mr. BRUNO] told you the other day what you would get by it—that slavery would get the shell, and freedom the oyster. There is truth in that. How can you expect to maintain slavery in Kansas, with three-fourths of her people opposed to the constitution? What good will it do you, unless you have laws to protect your slaves? Can you maintain it against the will of a community, even if you

have laws to give sanction to holding slaves? I see gentlemen from the South here, who know that it cannot be done.

But we are blamed for maintaining the position we do. Here let me say, that there may be no misunderstanding, that I have a very high regard for the judicial tribunals of my country ; but, sir, I have no regard for political decisions, pronounced by a political court. I never had, and I never will have. Slavery, I assert, cannot exist in the absence of positive law in its favor. The doctrine established, as gentlemen say, by the decision of the Supreme Court of the United States, is that slavery exists in all the Territories. Here, again, I follow my old political leader, Henry Clay. He said, in the debate on the compromise measures :

"Far different would, I fear, be our case, if, unhappily, we should be led into war, into civil war—if the two parts of this country should be placed in a hostile position towards each other, in order to carry slavery into new territories acquired from Mexico. Mr. President, we have heard—all of us have read—of the efforts of France to propagate—what, on the continent of Europe? Not slavery, sir, not slavery, but the rights of man ; and we know the fate of her efforts at propagandism of that kind. But if, unhappily, we should be involved in war, in civil war, between the two parts of this Confederacy, in which the effort upon the one side should be to restrain the introduction of slavery into the new territories, and upon the other side to force its introduction there, what a spectacle should we present to the astonishment of mankind, in an effort, not to propagate rights, but—I must say it, though I trust it will be understood to be said with no design to excite feeling—a war to propagate wrongs in the territories thus acquired from Mexico. It would be a war in which we should have no sympathies, no good wishes ; in which all mankind would be against us ; in which our own history itself would be against us ; for, from the commencement of the Revolution down to the present time, we have constantly reproached our British ancestors for the introduction of slavery into this country."

But it is said here that this was originally slave territory ; that slavery existed there when we acquired it from France. Well, that was certainly so ; but slavery was abolished there north of the line thirty-six degrees thirty minutes, and the compromise by which it was abolished was assented to for the third of a century. But the very moment that this territory is open for settlement, it is seized upon and converted to slavery, not alone by fraud, but by force and arms. An effort is made by the force of this Government to wrest it from freedom and to secure it to slavery forever. The North performed its share of the contract. The South said that we should have freedom north of that line, and we said that you might have slavery south of it ; but the South now violates its compact, and insists on having slavery north of it.

But gentlemen say that this Lecompton constitution has all the forms of law in its favor. Well, let me ask these gentlemen this question : if the delegates to that convention had been elected by a full and fair vote of all the peo-

ple of the Territory, and had engrafted on that constitution certain provisions odious to all the people, and that people, before the act was consummated, came to Congress and protested against it, is there a man in this House—if the negro question was not involved in it—who would stand up and disregard that protest? If Oregon had come here with a constitution, and if her Delegate on this floor protested against it, and her Territorial Legislature protested against it, and ten thousand of her citizens were found protesting against it; and if the North, in spite of all that, attempted to force that constitution upon them, denunciations loud and long would have come from the South. There is not a Southern man that would not have been loud in his defence of the right of the people to form their own constitution. But, because there is a negro in this question, there is no such denunciation.

Mr. HUGHES. I would like to put a question to my colleague.

Mr. KILGORE. I have not time to be interrogated.

Mr. HUGHES. The question is very short. It is this—

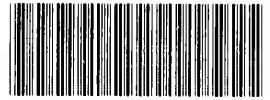
Mr. KILGORE. I would cheerfully yield to my colleague, if I could; but I have only a few minutes left. Then, sir, we have this case presented to us: We have the protest of the people of Kansas, we have the protest of their Territorial Legislature, we have the protest of their representative on this floor. And what excuse, let me ask Southern gentlemen, will you take home to your people, who love liberty, in justification of your effort to force on the people of Kansas institutions which they abhor? You may say that you wanted to test the question of the admission of slave States; but the intelligent portion of your constituents will tell you that you might have had a better ground than Kansas to test it in.

And now, let me say to Southern gentlemen that I am the last man who would justify the slightest encroachment upon them. I would

not tolerate it in word or deed. I hope that these gentlemen will at least acquit me of a desire to steal their negroes. I will let them alone; but let me ask gentlemen of the South to keep the negroes to themselves, and not thrust them into our faces. You have got the larger portion of the country. Keep your negroes and enjoy it. But leave the free Territory of Kansas to the unfortunate poor of the slave States and to the unfortunate poor of the free States. The Republican party, which is here opposing the admission of Kansas under this constitution, is in favor of giving the land of this Territory, in limited quantities, to the poor man South and to the poor man North, instead of giving it to overgrown corporations. We are in favor of distributing it to secure homes to the poor of both sections. Let Southern men tell their constituents that, and, my word for it, they will approve the position taken by the Republican party in this matter.

Now, I know that the name of "Abolitionist" is an odious name to the people of the South. I have been told, and I have no doubt truly, that mothers in the extreme South, when their children are unruly, threaten them with an Abolitionist. I have been told that it is not unusual, when a negro becomes a little overbearing, for his master to threaten to take him to Indiana, and sell him to an Abolitionist; and that the very threat causes the poor negro to almost cry his eyes out. We do not want to have that reputation among the people of the South. Let us have no more quarrelling over the negro question. I have not referred to the poverty of the South with angry feelings, or with any other than those of regret. I find many very fine gentlemen here from the South. It may be in part attributable to their long association with gentlemen from the North. I hope the benefits may be reciprocal. Let us be done with wrangling, and decide this question according to the principles of righteousness and the will of the people of Kansas, and the country will be satisfied.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 016 088 997 4

WASHINGTON, D. C.
BUELL & BLANCHARD, PRINTERS.
1858.